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Brooke F Adams 09/12/2006 06:26:57 PM From DB/Inbox: Brooke F Adams

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UNCLAS TRIPOLI 00487

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RUEHVT/AMEMBASSY VALLETTA 0100
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0438
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TRIPOLI 000487

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/MAG GAVITO, NEA/RA, OES FOR SENSENEY, HHS FOR
COURY AND STIEGER, CAIRO FOR DR. MARIE RICCIARDONE, NAMRU 3 FOR
DR. BOYNTON AND DR. MANSOUR

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: PROPOSED COOPERATION WITH LIBYAN BOARD OF MEDICAL
SPECIALTIES IN TRAINING AND BOARD CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES

¶1. SUMMARY: On August 30, 2006, ESTH officer and Dr. Mustafa Mansour of the Navy Medical Research Unit 3 (NAMRU 3) in Cairo, visited the Libyan Board of Medical Specialties to follow up on the July visit of U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Deputy Secretary Alex Azar. DepSec Azar and the Board agreed to collaborate, expand and improve Libya's medical board certification process with particular attention to creating recognized certifications in sub-specialties. The Libyans were challenged by ESTH officer to determine what sort of cooperation or workshop programs would benefit the board, and they responded with two reasonable proposals. The first was a basic discussion on the benefits, feasibility and technology associated with a telemedicine program. The second proposal was for the Libyans to fully fund a series of workshop visits by U.S. physicians, capable of conducting sub-specialty focused workshops in a continuing education capacity, with a secondary goal of discussing and evaluating the board certification criteria in the relevant sub-specialty during the visit. END SUMMARY.

Medical Board Hopes for Sustained Mutual Cooperation

¶2. DepSec Azar met in July with President of the Libyan Board of Medical Specialties Dr. Mustafa M. Zaidi. Dr. Zaidi was not able to attend the August 30 Embassy coordination session, but his priorities were presented by the three following board members:

--Dr. Elhadi Hussein, Consultant of Urology and Andrology to
Libyan Board of Medical Specialties
--Dr. Abdulhalim Shebani, Specialist Surgeon (ENT), Director of
International Cooperation for Libyan Board

--Dr. Gasem Amar Baruni, Chairman of Examination Committee,
Libyan Medical Board

The Board had retained a great deal of excitement from Mr. Azar's visit, and was adamant about not "letting the fire grow cold" on U.S. cooperation with the Libyan medical community. The group's proposals are focused and reasonable, but they are concerned that their practical efforts will be fruitless if they do not lead to institutional cooperation between the Libyan government and the U.S. government. They expressed their understanding of the importance of personal relationships in such cooperation, but showed an insightful knowledge of how sustained institutional / federal cooperation could enhance the board's capabilities and international standing.

Libyans Propose Enhancing Medical Board Certification Process

¶3. The board members proposed "concrete" programs to enhance Libya's medical board certification process, first, expanding Libya's ability to certify (with credibility) physicians in sub-specialties. Visiting U.S. physicians would be asked to conduct workshops with a secondary focus on examining and enhancing the Libyan Board's certification process for the relevant sub-specialty. The Libyans offered to fully fund the travel, lodging and expenses of the visiting physicians. A workshop on laparoscopic techniques is the boards first priority. ESTH officer asked if there were particular techniques or procedures in which they were interested, or if they were interested in a more general endoscopic workshop. The board restated that a general workshop on laparoscopic techniques was ideal, and that they preferred a U.S. physician capable of evaluating/improving their related sub-specialty board certification process. They were also open to any technological aspects that could be added to such a presentation such as partnering with equipment manufacturers to demonstrate or provide equipment familiar to the visiting surgeon.

¶4. As a sample visit itinerary, the Libyan Board suggested the following:

--A one week visit to Tripoli fully funded (Travel, Lodging and Per Diem)
--Conduct workshop lectures in the Libyan Medical Board conference auditorium.
--Perform Rounds in a local hospital with the aim of discussing management practice and bedside manner
--Lead or observe a series of surgical procedures (at Physicians discretion)
--(ESTH Officer also recommended cadaver labs or animal labs if the surgeon so desired)
--Evaluate and discuss board certification procedures and examinations. Provide feedback and recommend areas for improvement.

Libyans Seek Assistance in Developing Telemedicine Program

¶5. In addition, the board members were interested in discussing medical information technology issues, with regard to developing a comprehensive telemedicine program for Libya. ESTH Officer is working with local medical IT providers and the Embassy Family Nurse Practitioner, a former telemedicine unit manager, to arrange a presentation to the board detailing hardware, software and hospital infrastructure requirements necessary for such a program.

¶6. The board mentioned several long term proposals that were in line with DepSec Azar's July discussions, including a visit for 4-6 of the board members to the U.S. to work toward strengthening their board evaluation and examination procedures. ESTH Officer agreed to pass the request to HHS and OES. Please advise department interest in pursuing such a program.

Next Steps:

17. ESTH Officer will meet with the Libyan Board again on the week of September 17-21 (before the beginning of Ramadan) to discuss the proposed cooperative programs. The Libyan Board made clear their desire to maintain the momentum generated by Mr. Azar's visit, and showed their good faith by offering to fund the travel of U.S. physicians/surgeons to conduct the workshops. Their proposed visit to the U.S. would provide an excellent opportunity for the board members to discuss their processes and procedures and observe, first-hand, U.S. evaluation and examination procedures. The trip would also engender a great deal of good-will within the Libyan health community. If OES, HHS or NAMRU 3 have additional insights or particular interest in participation in such programs, please notify Embassy Tripoli.

18. Although the Libyan Board has agreed to support visa issuance for travel related to their proposals, any U.S. travelers planning travel to Libya should allow a minimum of eight weeks for visa approvals to be processed. Similarly, Libyans must travel to Embassy Tunis to apply for visas, and any proposals for activities including Libyan travel to the U.S. should factor a minimum of eight weeks lead time for visa issuance.

GOLDRICH